

Skills minister apologises for Fis fiasco — Page 6

“There was an agenda in play” — ex-NCG chief on why she kicked Ofsted out

Complaints against Ofsted revealed — Page 3

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Dame Jackie Fisher talks to FE Week reporter Rebecca Cooney. Pic: Ellis O'Brien

Funding cut report ‘tries to justify the unjustifiable’

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The government has been accused of trying to “retrospectively justify an unjustifiable policy” with an impact assessment of plans to reduce funding for 18-year-olds that confirmed colleges would be hit harder than school sixth forms.

The assessment of plans to reduce funding for 18-year-old learners to 17.5 per cent less than 16 and 17-year-olds was released on Monday, January 13 — more than three weeks after it was promised by Education Secretary Michael Gove.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock has assured MPs in a written answer to parliament that the assessment was drawn up before the funding rate cut was announced on December 10.

But it nevertheless shows that FE colleges

will be among the worst-hit of all institutions — with an average reduction in funding of three per cent.

For land-based colleges it's 2.5 per cent, for commercial and charitable providers it's 1.5 per cent, and for sixth form colleges it's 1.2 per cent.

But for school sixth forms it's just 0.4 per cent. However, the report does not say how much cash the funding rate cut, due next academic year, is expected to save.

It was further revealed that no decision to reduce the impact of the policy could be made until the end of next month at the earliest.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, told FE Week: “This is not a serious impact assessment — it is an attempt to retrospectively justify an unjustifiable policy.

“Fundamentally, we do not accept that there is a case for any further cuts to the 16 to 19 budget. Some sixth form colleges are already

on course to lose a third of their funding by the end of this parliament. The burden of deficit reduction is once again falling disproportionately on colleges rather than schools.”

One of the main concerns raised about the proposal was that black and minority ethnic (BME) students would be disproportionately affected. And although the report accepts there is a higher proportion of BME learners among full-time 18-year-olds than the total 16 to 18-year-old student population, it does not say how adversely they will be affected.

Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel said: “The impact assessment confirms what we told the Department for Education before Christmas — the decision to cut funding by 17.5 per cent disproportionately affects 18-year-olds who are taking vocational courses in colleges.

“It also is more likely to affect black and minority ethnic students and those in London.”

National Union of Students president Toni

Pearce said: “This cut will affect FE colleges more than school sixth forms, meaning FE students are yet again being treated like second class citizens.

“The FE system provides important second chances for millions of people, where all learners are treated as adults and given the opportunity to build their learning experience with their teachers, which is why cutting funding for these groups of students is incredibly damaging.”

A letter originally sent out by the Education Funding Agency last year said the decision, announced on December 10, had been made as those who were 18 at the start of the academic year “will already have benefited from two years of post-16 education and will not therefore need as much non-qualification provision within their study programmes as 16 and 17-year-olds”.

Shameful assessment, editors comment Page 8
See Mick Fletcher expert piece on Page 10

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Top Fis row tweets:



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@matthancockmp has suggested that SFA software fiasco is fault of providers' own MIS systems. Deliberate or ignorant?



@SteveHewittMIS
Unbelievable. @matthancockmp should sack whichever civil servant gave him that answer



@AuditFE
I have the RAGE. Be interesting to see how SFA conduct audits with FIS/PDSAT issues? #entertherealworld



@PaulW153
Not sure @matthancockmp fully understands the problems here



@OldDitch
18 yr old funding, traineeship troubles & this suggest @matthancockmp gets bad advice or ignores good - which?

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Provider training firm goes bust after 'downturn in bookings'

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A company that provided training to organisations across England through the Excellence in Learning brand is being liquidated after a downturn in bookings.

National Training Resources Ltd (NTRL) has appointed Birmingham-based Baker Tilly Business Services Ltd after officially going into liquidation on January 8.

Excellence in Learning was a brand created by NTRL to provide workshops, consultancy and in-house training services to a range of sectors, including learning providers.

It is understood that 16 people have lost their jobs after directors struggled to keep the company, based in Tamworth, afloat.

Meanwhile, it has been claimed the company has still not informed clients that it has gone bust, but bookings through the Excellence in Learning website have been suspended and phone lines seem to have been cut.

A Baker Tilly spokesperson told FE Week: "Following statutory meetings of members and creditors on January 8, Nicholas Lee and Dilip Dattani of Baker Tilly Business Services Ltd were appointed Joint Liquidators of National Training Resources Limited, based in Tamworth. The company, which was founded in 1993, had been profitable in recent years, however due to a downturn in bookings in the second half of 2013, the directors were no longer able to fund the company's losses.

"Prior to appointment, sixteen employees were made redundant, and the joint liquidators are currently in the process of

trying to realise assets for creditors."

There was shock at the loss of the 21-year-old company, and providers that had booked training now face the task of trying to get their money back.

Former director Jon Collis, who resigned from the board in September and said he had not been active in the company for most of 2013, said: "It is a huge pity, because not so long ago it was a very successful organisation. I was involved for 20 years and built up some of the areas of business like the Excellence in Learning brand and division. I built it up from nothing and it's a shame to see this happen."

Sally Connolly, the human resources manager at Oxfordshire-based training provider Qube Learning, said she had three operations managers due to take part in inspection nominee training last month but after the company failed to get in touch with venue details she started to investigate.

She said: "I started chasing them, but all my emails were coming back and the phone number on the website wasn't working."

Ms Connolly said the only way she found out what had happened was by calling one of the tutors who had previously worked for the organisation.

She said: "There was no indication that anything was wrong. We were very lucky in that the cheque had only been sent off a few days before so we were able to cancel it, so they don't owe us anything.

"Obviously, there are other resources we can use. They were not a lifeline for us, but it is a shame this has happened because they did run an awful lot of courses. It's also a shame we had to find out the way we did."

Poor showing for FE sector in employer list

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Just three FE and skills institutions made it onto a list of top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people compiled by gay rights group Stonewall.

And among the sector's representatives on the list of 100 employers doing the most to create supportive workplaces for LGB staff was Newham College, which hit the headlines last year when a recording of lecturer Dr Mark Walcott allegedly making homophobic comments was leaked on YouTube.

Creative Skillset and Somerset College completed the FE and skills sector's representation on the list. It stands in contrast to the five universities, 10 law firms, 10 NHS trusts or ambulance services and 17 local authorities on the list.

It has prompted calls for more FE and skills bodies to promote their LGB-friendly approaches.

The National Union of Students vice president for FE Joe Vinson said: "It's disappointing that only two colleges are featured on this list, especially because although there are thousands of for lesbian, gay, bisexual and

transgender students in FE colleges across the UK, not many LGBT societies exist on campus."

University and College Union head of equality and participation Helen Carr told FE Week: "Colleges should be commended for challenging themselves and submitting an assessment to Stonewall.

"More should be prepared to do this and open themselves up to greater scrutiny."

Her comments were echoed by the Institute for Learning chief executive Toni Fazaeli, who congratulated the two colleges, but encouraged more colleges to put themselves forward in future.

Newham College was the top performing college, ranked 82nd out of 100, despite hitting the headlines last year when a recording of lecturer Dr Mark Walcott making homophobic comments was leaked on YouTube.

It dropped 50 places in the ranking since last year and was overtaken by sector skills body Creative Skillset, at 41. For at least the last five years they had been the only sector institutions in the list until Somerset College joined them this year, at 91.

A Newham College spokesperson said: "Over many years, Newham College has focused unrelentingly on equality, and we are pleased Stonewall has recognised this."

FE Week news in brief

Funding concern letter

Industry leaders have written to Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg expressing concern about funding for the FE sector.

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, and 157 Group executive director Lynne Sedgmore both wrote separately as the wait for skills funding statement continues.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills said: "We are going through the process of allocating budgets for 2014-15 and 2015-16 and will set out plans in the usual way."

Hancock's Indian deal

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock has been in India to help tie up a deal that could see English providers involved in training for the development of a proposed new city.

He was there for the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the UK India Business Council (UKIBC) and the Lavasa Corporation for new city Lavasa.

Richard Heald, UKIBC chief executive, said: "This MoU will help train not only the employees of Lavasa, but also those in the Lavasa community."

Adult literacy inquiry

The Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee is to investigate adult literacy in England. The committee has announced the inquiry and invited evidence.

It will examine whether the government is doing enough to help adults improve reading, writing and maths skills, as well as looking at how the government can help them find jobs.

Submissions should be made by February 7 via the committee's section on the UK parliament website.



Referring to Dr Walcott, the spokesperson said it was an "isolated incident" and the college's "really strong commitment to equality" had led to his dismissal.

"The individual concerned clearly did not share the college's values, and was not promoting these values in his recorded conversation with staff," he said.

Stonewall head of workplace Simon Feeke said: "Dr Walcott's comments were absolutely reprehensible. But one individual's homophobia shouldn't detract from the fantastic work that many individuals are doing at Newham College to support gay staff and students."

Jo Welch, diversity and inclusion manager for Creative Skillset, said: "It is important to us not only to be progressive and forward-thinking in our approach to diversity and inclusion but to evidence the action we take to address inequality and under-representation."

Somerset College director of human resources and customer services Sheena Murphy-Collett (pictured) said: "I am absolutely delighted that our commitment and hard work has been recognised by Stonewall.

"We will continue to build on this success and further develop our strategy for all areas of equality and diversity."

A total of 369 employers put themselves forward to be considered for the index. A Stonewall spokesperson was unable to say how many were from the FE and skills sector.

Former college chief calls for Ofsted changes

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FE Week Exclusive



Ofsted's complaints process has been branded as "utterly pointless" by the chief executive who dared to boot inspectors out of her college.

In her first interview about the notorious 2012 inspection of NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group), Dame Jackie Fisher (pictured) told *FE Week* how she felt there was an "agenda" behind the education watchdog's visit.

She spoke out having left the college group around six months ago and with figures, released under the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act, revealing 35 complaints about FE and skills inspections in just over a year from September 2012. They include gripes about Ofsted conduct, administration and judgement.

Dame Jackie said: "Complaining about Ofsted is like entering a very dark room with both hands tied behind your back, and then being allowed to bounce off the walls for a few turns of the room before being quietly allowed to leave by the same door you entered — utterly pointless."

It comes just a week after LeSoCo principal Maxine Room vowed to appeal following her grade four inspection result.

A spokesperson for Ofsted said it did not comment on specific inspection complaints, but that all were "taken very seriously".

In July 2012, *FE Week* reported how NCG cut its inspection short following what Dame Jackie referred to at the time in an internal email to staff as "some troubling incidents".

Ofsted later concluded the visit to NCG, resulting in a downgrading to good.

But the experience left a bitter aftertaste for Dame Jackie, who complained about inspectors' conduct.

"It was unlike any of the other six or seven inspections I have been party to as a senior manager," she said.

"There was an agenda in play that was not directly related to the inspection."

Ofsted's response to her complaint, she said, was "largely in favour of Ofsted" and failed to reach a judgement on "some key issues of inspector conduct".

"The complaint was made to try and get an appropriate response from the leadership of Ofsted," added Dame Jackie.

"I assumed, a little naively as it turned out, that they would be as appalled as we were by the story we had to tell."

She has now called for changes to

Ofsted's three-step complaints procedure, saying it should be open to external scrutiny.

"Ofsted's lack of transparency can permit a range of failures... and this should not be tolerated," said Dame Jackie.

Her thoughts were echoed by Association of Colleges policy director Joy Mercer.

She said complaints feedback — which is currently only available through parliamentary questions or FoI requests — should be published in Ofsted's annual report.

"Ofsted needs to make a stronger distinction between complaints about the conduct of an inspection and the procedure for colleges to appeal against their grade," she added.

Stewart Segal, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said he was "of the view that we need to have an appeals system that has clear timescales, maximum transparency and independence".

Of the 25 step two (formal) complaints against Ofsted last academic year, nine were upheld, according to its FoI response to *FE Week*.

In this academic year, up to November 22, all four complaints received were upheld.

Five step three complaints (for objections to Ofsted's handling of the stage one complaint) were made in the 2012/13 academic year, plus one this academic year, but none was upheld.

The education watchdog did not disclose the identity of complainants, nor the outcome where complaints were upheld.

Its spokesperson said: "As complaints often include challenges to judgements and concerns about the inspection process, these are considered together as part of a single investigation."

"We currently developing a new process to gather feedback from complainants about how their concerns have been handled and plan to implement this later in the year."

"All inspection reports go through rigorous quality assurance to ensure that the judgements made are based on evidence. Draft reports are also shared with providers before publication to check for factual accuracy."

A spokesperson for NCG, which is yet to be reinspected, declined to comment.

The Ofsted complaints process

There is no process to appeal against Ofsted inspection results, but providers can make complaints against the conduct, administration or judgement of inspectors.

The process has three steps. **Step one** involves a verbal complaint raised with the lead inspector during the inspection. **Step two** involves a formal written complaint submitted up to 10 days after the incident or publication of the report.

Step three sees an internal review of the handling of the complaint, but does not deal with the complaint itself.

If complainants are still not satisfied, they can request an external review from the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted (ICASO) but once again, this investigates how the complaint was handled, not the complaint itself, and the ICASO cannot overturn inspection judgements.

Foundation appoints 'learner voice' to directors board

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Student leader Joe Vinson has been given a seat on the director's board of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) after talks to ensure top-level learner representation.

Mr Vinson, vice president for FE at the National Union of Students (NUS), takes the post despite initial ETF board plans in which learners did not feature.

However, it is understood his post will remain open to successive student figures.

Mr Vinson told *FE Week*: "I am really excited about having a position on the board for the ETF."

"It is something the NUS has been requesting for quite some time now."

"I hope that added student representation will help give a unique and much needed perspective on how to improve the quality of education for learners."

The ETF, the FE sector's "self-improvement" body, had been in "discussions" with the NUS since *FE Week* exclusively revealed in April last year how a draft implementation plan had no place for learner representation on the board.

But there were proposed seats on the board for the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Employment and Learning

Providers and the Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations (AAETO), which operates under the name Hoxex.

However, an ETF spokesperson said: "Following consideration of a proposal from the NUS, to ensure that the organisation benefits from a representative learner perspective on its governance matters, the board confirmed Joe's appointment at its December meeting. We are sure that he will provide an expert view, informed by knowledge of learner experience."

The ETF (formerly known as the FE Guild) was formally launched in August last year, taking over from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

Jenny Williams (pictured bottom left), director of vocational education and teaching at the ETF, was one of five full-time and seven part-time staff transferred to the new organisation from LSIS under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations.

And the appointment of former LSIS employee Helen Pettifor (pictured bottom right as director for professional standards and workforce development means that eight of the 21 people currently employed at ETF came from LSIS.

The ETF spokesperson said: "As part of



Left: Joe Vinson. Above, an April 2013 *FE Week* cartoon depicting, from left, NUS leader Toni Pearce and AoC chief executive Martin Doel, ETF chief executive Peter Davies, former AELP chief executive Graham Hoyle and David Hughes, former ETF chair



the closure of LSIS, and in line with the transfer of some functions to the ETF, some staff transferred via the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) protocols.

"It was right for these staff to transfer, and their expertise and knowledge has enabled a number of services and programmes to progress at pace. Through open recruitment, we are seeking to ensure that the organisation has the expert and skilled professionals it needs."



"If the best candidate for a particular role has previously worked for LSIS, then that is simply a matter of fact. We will recruit the most suitable person for the job."

Further scrutiny after finance claims

The FE Commissioner began scrutinising Barnfield College at the end of last week, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has announced.

The Bedfordshire-based college has been under investigation by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA) following allegations of poor financial management and the investigation report is expected to be published by the end of the month.

A BIS spokesperson said last week: "The commissioner will be visiting the college imminently, certainly towards the end of this week."

An allegation of poor financial management along with concerns about "extensive" staff restructuring and redundancies were passed onto Education Secretary Michael Gove by local MPs Gavin Shuker and Kelvin Hopkins in October.

The college is part of the Barnfield Federation, which also includes six secondary school academies and four primary school academies.

Judy Oliver, acting chair of the Barnfield Federation board confirmed commissioner David Collins would be visiting for a fortnight.

"Both the management and governors of the college will be fully engaged with the FE Commissioner David Collins and his team," she said.

The founder and former director general of the federation, Sir Peter Birkett, stepped down in the summer, just over a year after the college went from an Ofsted rating of outstanding to satisfactory (now termed requires improvement).

Inspectors get college careers advice guidance

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Ofsted inspectors have been issued new guidance on judging colleges' provision of independent careers guidance.

According to the education watchdog, its revised handbook for inspectors visiting FE providers has undergone "minor clarifications" in areas like good practice visits, re-inspection monitoring visits and the reporting process.

And it has also seen the introduction of a section on inspecting colleges' provision of independent careers advice for learners up to the age of 18.

The need for independent advice came into effect in September, and Ofsted said its inspectors had been aware of the change.

Its spokesperson told *FE Week*: "The changes are minor stylistic and grammatical clarifications to ensure the meaning is clear and ensure guidance and practice are fully attuned."

"There are minor clarifications around good practice visits, re-inspection monitoring visits, coverage of inspections, the reporting process and the requirement on colleges to secure independent careers guidance for learners up to the age of 18."

The handbook itself says "inspectors should take into account the extent to which FE and sixth form colleges implement the requirement to secure independent careers guidance to learners up to the age of 18 introduced in September 2013".

It also says inspectors should judge colleges on "the extent to which timely information, advice and guidance enable individuals to gain greater learning autonomy and decrease



dependence on others, the availability and quality of advice and guidance on learning and personal issues and whether staff have the necessary qualifications, experience and skills to give information, advice and guidance".

It comes amid an ongoing campaign by Association of Colleges (AoC) called Careers Guidance: Guaranteed (pictured), which aims to improve schools' careers guidance.

As part of the campaign, the AoC has also drafted a petition to the Department for Education (DfE) calling for it to match-fund the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on the National Careers Service (NCS).

In 2012/13, the DfE gave £4.7m to the NCS, compared to £85m from BIS, £14m from the Ministry of Justice and £1.5m from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Joy Mercer (pictured), AoC director of policy, said: "We don't oppose Ofsted checking on the careers advice provided by colleges — we know our members have an excellent track record in this regard."

"However, the real problem, as Ofsted acknowledged recently, is in schools not colleges."

"As part of our Careers Guidance: Guaranteed campaign, we're calling on Ofsted to make careers advice and guidance a deciding factor in the inspection grade a school gets — if their careers advice isn't good or outstanding then they cannot receive either of these grades for their overall result."

"Helping young people to make their future education choices is too important to leave it to chance."

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Administered college gets 'direct' role in sale of provision

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Troubled K College is back on the market — this time with its own corporation playing a greater role in the sale after the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) tendering process proved unsuccessful last year.

Three bidders had approached the SFA to take on the college after a competitive tendering process, but talks ended without agreement.

But now interim principal Phil Frier (pictured below) has told *FE Week* that he expected to find new providers and have handed over the college's SFA and Education Funding Agency provision by August.

"We're working closely with both funding agencies, but we are now going to be able to engage with new providers directly," he said.

"We'll be having discussions with them over the next two months so that we are able to transfer the assets of the college over by August this year.

"I think those discussions will lead us to being clear about who the preferred providers are by February."

Mr Frier declined to comment on who



the potential providers were.

The Kent college is currently in administered status, having been visited by FE Commissioner David Collins after an 'inadequate' Ofsted inspection result last month.

The move stripped college management of the ability to make many key decisions independently, instead having to seek approval of the commissioner and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

"The intervention of the FE Commissioner and the Skills Minister has been very helpful because it has put back in the hands of the corporation some key decisions," said Mr Frier.

He added: "I think with hindsight everyone agrees that the competition process slowed things down and the procurement process forced a straightjacket which created difficulties.

"It is easy looking back to see that we could have done it differently and the college could have been more directly involved from the start."

The SFA would still have a "significant" role to play, he said, both financially and in terms of "decision making".

"But ultimately the involvement of the FE Commissioner means there



K College

is now a channel from the corporation through the commissioner, to the department directly to the Minister," said Mr Frier.

"And the discussion I had with the commissioner was that that's the route now that will finalise the decision making."

The college, formed by a merger between West Kent College and South Kent College in 2010, ran into financial difficulties which led to the resignation of then-principal Bill Fearon in January last year.

When Mr Frier took over, he conceded the merger had "failed", and the college faced being broken up and sold off through a tendering process run by the SFA, to which the college owed £15m, as well as commercial debts.

Mr Frier said: "Commercial debts will be transferred to the new provider.

"I don't think there's any doubt about that

— you'd expect to take on the mortgage as well as the house."

But he said the liabilities to the funding agencies were "still up for discussion".

During the initial competition process, the college was divided up to be sold off in seven parts.

An SFA spokesperson said: "The agency received tenders from three bidders which covered all seven application options for the procurement.

"Unfortunately all of the bids were unsuccessful which meant that we were unable to proceed any further.

"We will now be working with K College on the transfer of provision and learners to alternative providers by August 2014."

Parties should email philfrier@kcollege.ac.uk to express an interest in taking over provision at K College.

Teenage participation behind new DfE probe by audit office

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The Department for Education (DfE) is facing a second National Audit Office probe, with efforts to increase participation in education and skills among England's 16 to 18-year-olds set to come under the spotlight.

The DfE's Education Funding Agency had already been under investigation since June last year by the audit office, which has been looking into whether it was "prepared to meet future challenges".

The findings are expected to be out by next month, an audit office spokesperson told *FE Week*, but there are now plans for another investigation, this time into whether the DfE is doing enough about the expected growth in the number of 16 to 18-year-olds in education.

It is due out in the summer and comes as the government prepares to make young people stay in education until they are 18 by raising the statutory participation age. The change is expected to come into effect next year.

An audit office spokesperson said: "There are almost two million 16 to 18-year-olds in England. However, at the end of 2012, 9.6 per cent of 16 to 18-year-olds were Neet.

"The government is committed to raising the statutory participation age to 18 by 2015.

"It is increasing the number of places in education and training and providing more



support to young people so that they can participate, particularly those with additional needs or who face barriers to learning.

"This study will examine the DfE's approach to increasing participation and the progress that it is making. It will also examine whether education and training provision and learner support meets the needs of young people and employers."

The investigation into the DfE's agency for funding and compliance was started in June 2013, when an audit office spokesperson told *FE Week*: "The agency distributed more than £50bn in 2012-13 to local education providers in England to fund education and training for learners aged three to 19 — three to 25 for those with learning difficulties.

"The agency is also responsible for the oversight of financial management and governance in open academies, and for major capital programmes in the education sector.

"Our report will examine the performance of the agency to date, and consider whether it is prepared to meet future challenges."

Loans system 'leads to 18 pc' fall in apprentice numbers

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The FE loans system could lead to a drop in learner numbers of up to 18 per cent, a thinktank has suggested.

Research by New Economy predicts the number of 24-plus learners in skills training in Greater Manchester will fall by between 15 and 18 per cent in the wake of the introduction of advanced learning loans.

The government itself had previously projected a 20 per cent drop, according to New Economy.

It comes after Business Secretary Vince Cable told *FE Week* last month that the apprenticeship FE loans policy was being dropped, but other FE loans would remain.

However, the Student Loans Company (SLC) was still processing apprentice FE loans at the time of going to press and could not confirm when they would stop.

Nevertheless, the New Economy research found that hardly any adults in Greater Manchester had taken out a loan to pursue an apprenticeship because of the significant cost involved.

New Economy director of skills and employment James Farr said: "It is a relief that apprenticeships are now not going to be included in the loans policy.

"The growth of apprenticeships among adults over 24 can be counted as being as one

of the conurbation's success stories of recent years. Loans would have wiped out much of this progress.

"But our research carries warnings should the government decide to extend the system of loans to other target groups in the future — to older learners at level two, for example.

"The clear implication is that the loans policy will lower investment in skills and harm employment prospects in years to come."

The FE loans system was introduced by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) after it stopped part-funding study for those aged over 24. Now, loans to cover the full cost of training, which must be met by the learner, are handed out by the SLC.

New Economy claims its research is the first authoritative investigation anywhere in the UK into the impact of loans since the policy was introduced.

Its research was based on a survey of level three and above learners over 24 in Greater Manchester, of whom 83 per cent had taken out a loan to fund study.

A BIS spokesperson said: "Nationally, we have had more than 55,000 applications for 24+ advanced learning loans, which is in line with our expectations."

He added: "To raise awareness of the loans and help learners to make their decisions we have used feedback from learners to develop a range of communication materials for providers."

Editor's comment

A shameful assessment

Whether the impact assessment for the 18-year-old rate cut was written before or after the announcement will be for others to debate.

More importantly, now that it has been published, what do we learn from it? And equally, what do we not learn from it?

Unsurprisingly, we learn that FE colleges supporting BME learners on vocational courses are hit hardest, while school sixth forms come out as good as unscathed.

Shameful.

Surprisingly, for a funding-related impact assessment, we don't learn anything about the amount of money the government think it will save with this cut.

Shameful.

Education Secretary Michael Gove has already called his own policy "regrettable" and indicated those colleges hit hardest may get a degree of protection — or 'cushioning' as funders like to call it.

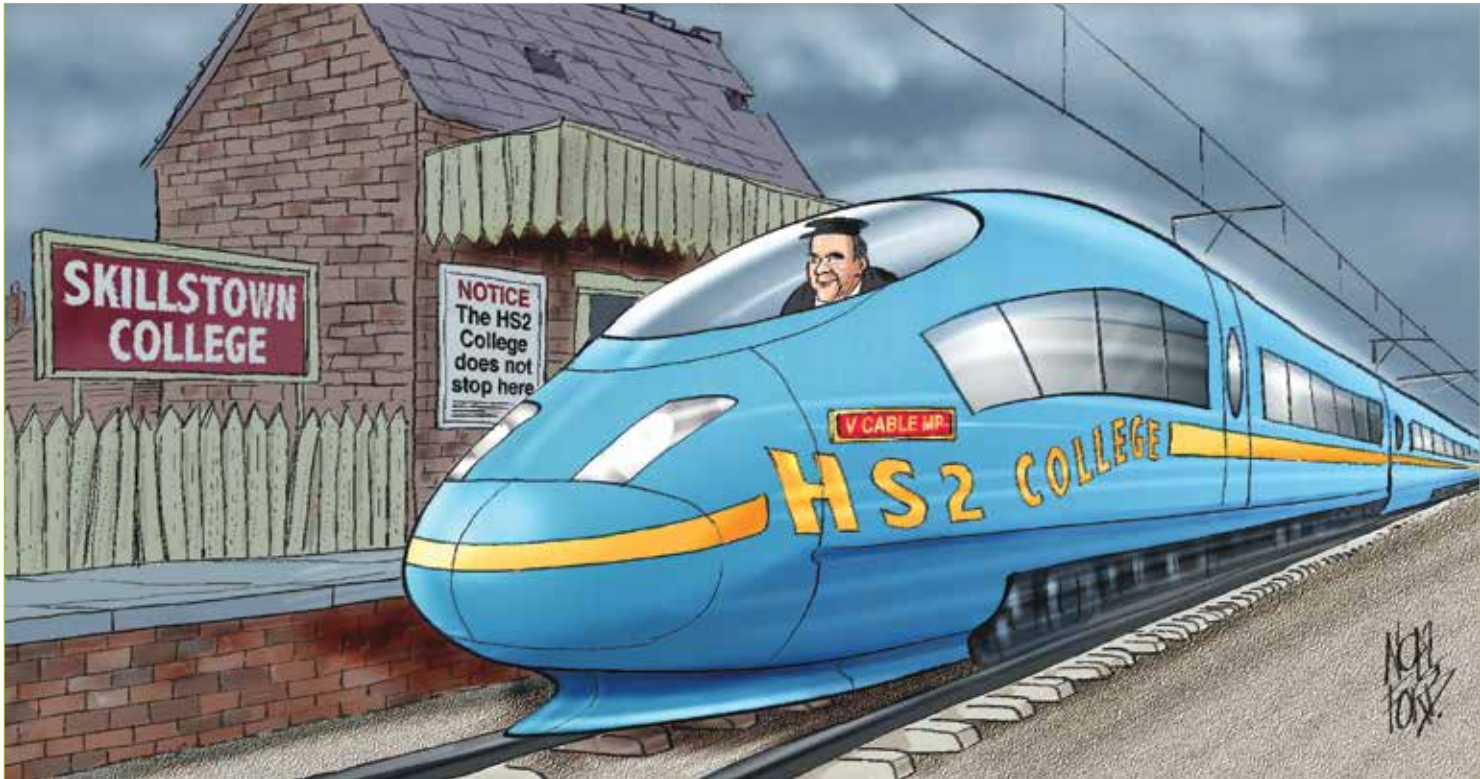
This is not good enough.

It's an unfair, unjustifiable and under-researched policy in which Mr Gove should feel no shame in binning.

Chris Henwood, editor
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Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of FE Week?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.



Questions over need for new HS2 rail college

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Government plans for the first new FE college in 20 years, to train engineers for the £50bn high speed two (HS2) rail link, have come under tough scrutiny from sector leaders.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Transport (DfT) have unveiled proposals to train workers for the line that will link Birmingham and London by 2026.

The exact details of the college — which has been reported nationally as costing £20m — remain unclear, with the DfT and BIS yet to decide where it will be sited.

Sector leaders questioned whether what could potentially be the first new college since 1993 was actually needed, while it remained unclear who would run the institution.

It is also understood the deal will not involve simply bestowing incorporated college status upon an independent learning provider currently in existence.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "It is right that a large scale investment in bricks and mortar should also come with investment in the elite skills which will help build it.

"That's why this government is launching

the first FE college in over 20 years, which will train the next generation of engineers in rail, construction and environmental studies that this country needs to prosper."

Association of Colleges president Michele Sutton said: "We are pleased to hear of the government's plans for the first new FE college in 20 years.

"We believe this recognises the value and strengths of autonomous colleges which provide technical and vocational education closely aligned to the needs of industry.

"The fact that the new college will be focussed on providing much needed skills and technical expertise in industry-standard facilities is equally important and welcome.

"Colleges are already delivering this kind of vocational training, therefore we are keen to learn more of the detail, particularly in relation to value for money and the financial alternatives such as existing colleges also taking on the task of meeting the needs of HS2 by upgrading or adapting existing facilities."

Association of Teachers and Lecturers general secretary Dr Mary Bousted said: "It is worrying that existing colleges allegedly don't have the capacity or expertise to train sufficient numbers of young adults and adults with the skills needed.

"The government should be helping FE colleges to provide engineering and requisite

skills. The need for an HS2 college may show there should be a review of how vocational education and training fits into wider industrial policy and skills development.

"The government seems to think that inventing new schools and colleges is the answer to everything."

It is expected that HS2 will create up to 2000 apprentices during the lifetime of construction.

The college is expected to be open by 2017, when construction of HS2 is due to begin. Tracks to Manchester and Leeds will be built in a second phase, to be completed by 2032-33.

A BIS spokesperson said: "BIS and HS2 Ltd intend for the college to be a new institution and for it to apply for incorporated status — if successful HS2 Ltd will be strongly represented on the board of governors.

"The college will operate in partnership with existing FE and higher education providers across the UK to ensure that the skills needs of HS2 are met.

"Our vision is that the college will become a world leader in the provision of training for High Speed Rail.

"We believe that there will be strong export potential for the college once established.

"The college will also provide engineers for many other projects within the rail industry and beyond. It will not be solely reliant on HS2 for its business."

Comments

Leading London college [LeSoCo] tumbles to inadequate

Hancock faces MPs' wrath over DfE cut

The recent experience of ofsted has shown me that while inspectors worked hard to observe teaching, learning and assessment there is an incredible focus on three year trends and data that is sliced and diced every which way. If teachers perform to a good standard, students and employers are happy and the college has managers who know their data the overall grade will be good or better. If not then expect a poor grade. Simple as that.

David McLoughlin

Mr Hancock needs to understand that quite often after five years of non-achievement at school, teenagers enter the FE environment a take advantage of life-changing opportunities and to get the vocational skills they need for employment, FE or HE. Furthermore, achieving functional skills in just one year of study, really does put under the microscope why FE is continually punished when school delivery is never brought into question.

Someone studying a level two qualification in college (after failing GCSEs at school) may well gain confidence and move onto a two year level three programme, which will mean that they are 18 /19 when they start the second year, not only should this be fully funded, but also celebrated and valued by all.

Derek Street

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@Marcoable

Is the college model flawed...

FE Week profile

Ameen Hussain ~ his story

@PaulOfford

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The manager of Greenwich's Asian Resource Centre, and recipient of an MBE in the New Year honours list for services to adult education, talks to FE Week

It has been a long journey for Ameen Hussain from the Indian Pearl City of Hyderabad to collecting an MBE for services to adult education and his local community in South London.

Hussain, aged 71, may have been "amazed, flabbergasted and humbled" to be recognised in the New Year honours list, but it was just reward for his dedication over more than two decades to broadening people's horizons through the open-to-all Asian Resource Centre, in Abbey Wood.

His education of others started in 1970 for Hussain, with a maths teaching job at Sedgehill School, in Lewisham, South London.

"I wrote to my father saying 'I think I will be out by Christmas, teaching probably isn't for me'. It turned out I was wrong, as I stayed at Sedgehill for 32 years," he said.

Hussain had moved to London three years earlier. His first job in England was working as a quality control inspector at Teddington Auto Controls, which made thermostats, and Landis and Gyr, in Acton, which made household electricity meters.

But he was destined to return to maths and the classroom having studied at two secondary schools in India before completing a degree in maths, physics and chemistry, along with a masters degree in maths at Osmania University, Hyderabad.

He was born in 1942 in Hyderabad, a city within a state bearing the same name.

"I originally came over here because I wanted to continue my studies in the UK, but that turned out to be too expensive," explained Hussain.

Hussain's father Muhammed Khasim, who died in 1985 aged 77, was an excise inspector for Hyderabad's civil service.

He moved around a lot because of the job and would take wife Kulsum, who died aged 76 in 1995, daughter Jameela, who died in December aged 73, and the young Ameen with him.

"My dad's job took us all over Hyderabad, which meant I attended a lot of different primary schools in regions where people spoke different languages," said Hussain.

"I started-off in the Kannadi-speaking region, then moved to a school in the Telugu-speaking area, before going to another school where they spoke the Marathi language.

"Luckily, they all had Urdu as the main language of education, which was my mother tongue."

Hussain, of Welling, in Kent, is a devoted husband of Nafees, 61, and father of daughters Yasmin, 35, and Sameena, 31, and son Abid, 30.

He also dotes on his grandchildren

Amanah, four, Yusuf, one, and Musab, who is four months old.

He said: "I am most proud of my family but of course have taken huge pride in the MBE, which I dedicate to my tutors, students and all the other people who have helped me along the way."

It was while working at the Sedgehill that Hussain started teaching part-time at what was then called the Greenwich Asian Resource Centre from 1990.

He said: "The biggest influence on my community work was my dear friend and mentor Sadhu Sing Biring, who introduced me to the centre and was a great campaigner for the local Asian community.

"He sadly passed away [aged 69] in May 2012 and I wish he had been here see me get the MBE.

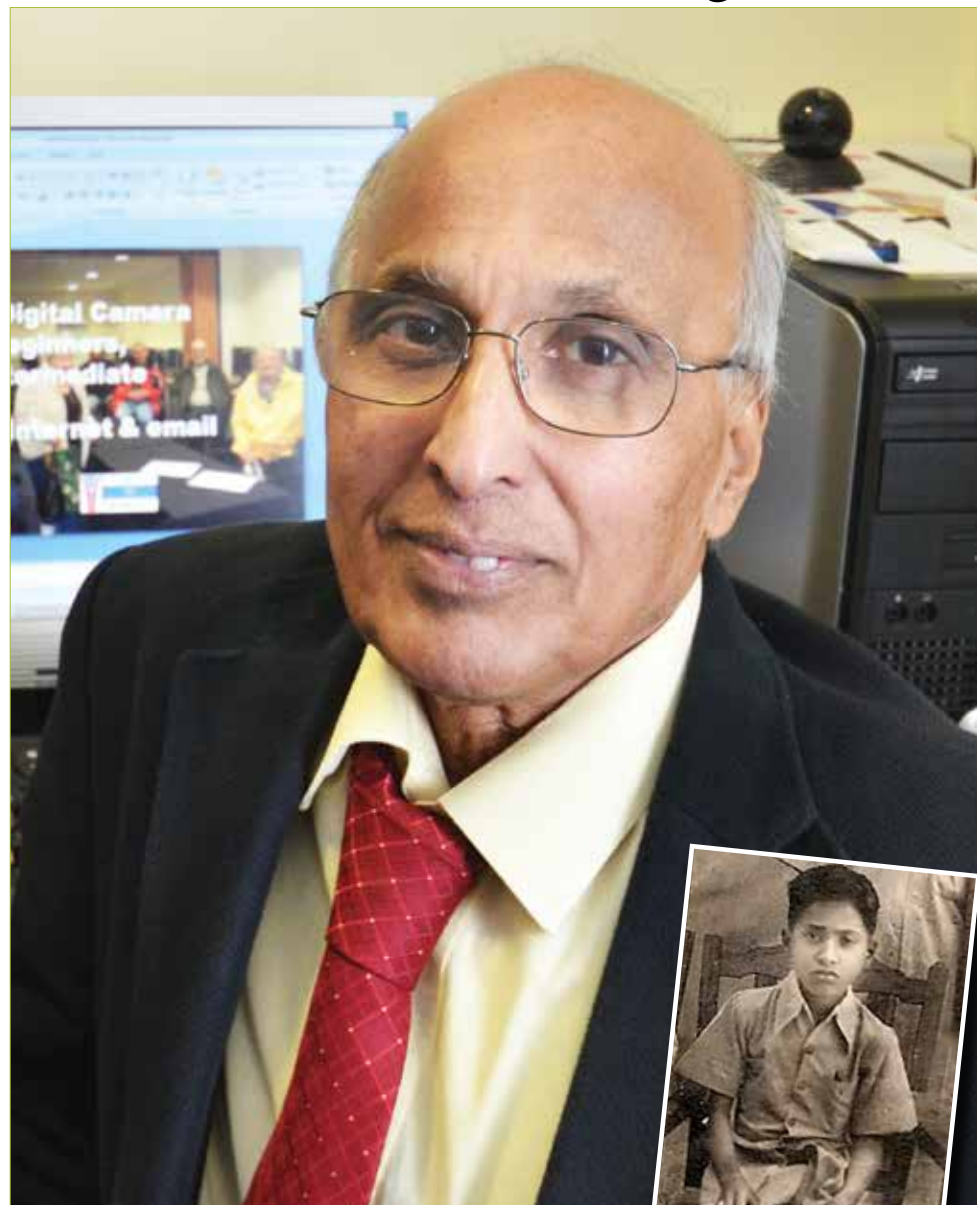
"I taught at the centre in the evenings after school and on Saturdays until the council decided it wanted to withdraw funding in 1996 and the main centre closed temporarily.

"However, our languages school was still running and the tutors weren't paid for six months, because there was no-one left to do the paperwork.

"I wrote to my father saying 'I think I will be out by Christmas, teaching probably isn't for me'. It turned out I was wrong, as I stayed at Sedgehill for 32 years"

"The management committee asked if I could sort this problem out. I did the paperwork and sorted out the payments, then the main centre re-opened and I became more and more involved with things like helping people with passports and housing problems."

Hussain took over as the centre's manager after taking early retirement from his school in 2002, a year after its name was shortened to the Asian Resource Centre.



Inset: Ameen Hussain when he was nine years old

He said: "We dropped Greenwich from the name because we used to get phone calls asking if it was just for people from Greenwich, which it wasn't.

"It became the Asian Resource Centre, but then we were getting non-Asian people asking if it was just for Asians and we welcome everyone, so these days we just call it ARC."

Hussain is most proud of access to teaching courses for Asian women run by the centre from 2003 to 2005.

"I knew there was a lot of untapped talent among educated Asian women," he said.

"Many of them had degrees, but they were not getting out of the house after marrying and having a family, because of the pressures of raising children and the stigma against them returning to work or education.

"We started running access to teaching courses, in partnership with the University of Greenwich, and ended up helping dozens of women on their way to better things."

The centre has run a huge variety of classes during Hussain's time in charge, including English for speakers of foreign languages, maths, science, dance and clothing repair classes for adults, and family learning sessions on computers, history and food from around the world.

The centre is still thriving today and Hussain has no intention of winding things down.

"We cater for everyone really. There's one group called the Thamesmead Surfers for older people interested in learning about computers," explained Hussain.

"The average age of people involved is 76 and they range from 69 to 84. We teach them about the internet, e-mail, digital cameras, and they used our computers at the centre to set up their own website.

"One of my favourite members, David Kelly, arrived at our door with a laptop in 2008 when he was 89 and asked if we could show him how to use it. He was one of our best students right up until he passed away two years ago.

"My great passion is for adult training and he was living proof of my firm belief that you can learn at any age."

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

Gone With The Wind, by Margaret Mitchell

What did you want to be when you grew up?

A top civil servant in India, like my father

What's your pet hate?

I don't hate anything

What do you do to switch off from work?

I like listening to music and reading about Hollywood and Bollywood films

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

My grandchildren mean so much to me and I would enjoy having my party with them more than anyone else

Marketing 'FE's best-kept secret' — have we got the seven Ps right on traineeships?



Why have traineeships had such a poor take-up, asks Ruth Sparkes.

Traineeships were supposed to be 'the next big thing' for FE.

You may be forgiven for thinking that traineeships were a government knee-jerk reaction to our shocking youth unemployment figures.

While it may well be the case that 59 per cent of young people get five good GCSEs with English and maths, and these teens can go on to comfortably complete A-levels, BTecs and apprenticeships, what's left for the 41 per cent of young people who don't make the grades?

Pendennis, a luxury yacht builder in Falmouth, takes on a dozen apprentices every year.

This year, around 180 young people applied for an apprenticeship with the firm. This means, broadly, that the 168 applicants who were rejected didn't have the personal skills or the qualifications the company was looking for.

We often hear similar stories surrounding the big national companies such as Rolls Royce and BT, but believe me, this sorry tale is replicated at a company near you.

Employers have been complaining that young people don't have the necessary skills to start an apprenticeship. Traineeships are supposed to bridge that gap, and I'm sure they do. However, take-up is so poor and it's tricky to find a learner to ask them about it.

So, if traineeships are a good thing, and there's a real need for them, why is take-up so embarrassingly poor? We need to ask whether we've got the seven Ps right.

First, the product. There is no point in developing a product or service that no one wants.

We have already established the great need for traineeships, so by and large this part of the mix is okay.

Second, place. The product must be available in the right place, at the right time.

FE, like other education sectors, has its own cycle, and traineeships were not presented to the sector at the right time. As colleges and higher education providers know, any new course that misses the advice and guidance cycle misses out.

Third, promotion. Promotion is the way an organisation communicates what a product does and what it can offer its 'customers'.

Who knows about traineeships? Government, the FE sector and West Ham's Karren Brady know all about traineeships.

What about headteachers, careers teachers, advice and guidance people, parents and most importantly, the prospective trainee? These very important stakeholders know nothing of traineeships. And they aren't alone. By and large, employers don't know about them either. Promotion of traineeships has been low key to say the least.

"FE, like other education sectors, has its own cycle, and traineeships were not presented to the sector at the right time"

Fourth, process and people. The process of giving a service, and the behaviour of those who deliver are crucial to customer satisfaction.

And now in an effort to increase take-up, grade three providers who 'require improve-

ment', according to Ofsted) will now be able to deliver traineeships as prime contractors (where they have been downgraded in-year).

On one hand, this is a good thing. Grade one and two colleges are not equally spread out geographically, so before this edict, a potential 'trainee' in somewhere like Bristol might have been unable to secure a traineeship simply because of a lack of a quality provider.

But on the other hand, the government was, initially, at pains to make sure that traineeships weren't seen as sub-standard and so restricted their delivery to only good and outstanding providers, along with grade three subcontractors.

Traineeships are already below apprenticeships in the hierarchy of qualifications, and I believe the government was trying to ensure that employers and learners viewed these as desirable qualifications. If you restrict the availability of a product, you serve to make it exclusive.

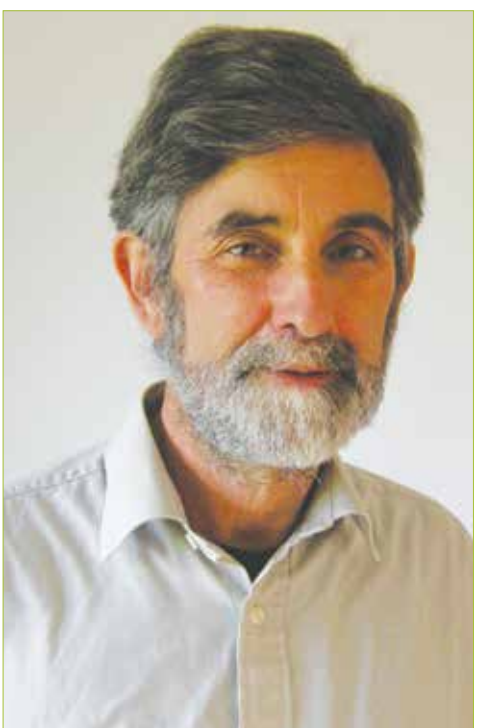
Fifth, price. It is the only element of the marketing mix that generates revenue — everything else represents a cost.

Funding for traineeships has been sketchy and confusing, and a few providers have been put off by this. Never forget other products are available.

Traineeships need more time and proper, planned attention to really take hold, until then, they'll sadly continue to be FE's best-kept secret.

Ruth Sparkes, managing director of marketing and education, media and PR agency EMPRA

Rate cut impact report leads to more questions and criticism



The Department for Education would have been hoping its impact assessment of the controversial 17.5 per cent funding rate cut for full-time 18-year-olds put an end to further questioning. But, as Mick Fletcher, explains, it's done quite the opposite.

Imagine a man embarrassed about his short stature. Instead of saying he is four inches shorter than his friend, he could accurately say that he is only two inches shorter than the

average of their heights.

Indeed, if he were six inches shorter than everyone else in the whole land except for his friend, he could still truthfully say that he is only two inches shorter than the average, as long as he reveals in a footnote that he means the average of himself and his friend.

If this sounds convoluted, it is, but that in essence is how the Department for Education has approached the impact assessment for the cut to 18-year-old funding.

Government is clearly embarrassed to have made a cut that discriminates against disadvantaged students.

Those who are still studying in FE at the age of 18 are more likely to be from a disadvantaged background than 16 or 17-year-olds.

They are even more likely to be from such a background than 16 and 17-year-old students in school sixth forms who, in general, come from more affluent households.

To focus cuts on these students in particular risks undermining any gains achieved through policies like the pupil premium and further damaging social mobility.

The impact assessment presents the data in a way calculated to disguise these facts.

Instead of comparing 18-year-olds with 16 and 17-year-olds it compares them with the average – 16 to 18-year-olds as a whole.

Instead of comparing those affected with the rest of the cohort it only looks at those on the ILR ie it excludes school sixth forms which actually recruit more full time 16 and 17-year-

old pupils than FE colleges.

Furthermore, it makes no mention of the potential distortion caused by omitting such a large part of the population in question nor attempts to estimate its direction and scale.

The inescapable fact is that this is a cut that targets poorer students and those who work with them in FE colleges.

"The assessment appears to have been written to justify a policy that is clearly flawed"

The assessment does identify that the impact on FE colleges is more than seven times greater than it is on school sixth forms (the authors show this as a 2.6 percentage point difference whereas it is equally true to say that colleges are hit 750 per cent harder).

In a commentary that is truly breathtaking, however, they argue that it is acceptable to hit colleges harder because schools "have so far seen a significantly larger reduction in funding per student since 2011/12, as part of equalising funding rates across institution types".

What that means in translation is that after years of foot dragging government has

finally abolished the indefensible funding gap between schools and colleges — and since that has meant a cut to school budgets it is now right to target any further cuts on FE. The authors have clearly been clutching at straws.

The Government seems equally embarrassed by the impact on black and minority ethnic (BME) students and uses similar strategies to downplay the impact.

Once more, the large numbers in school sixth forms are left out of the calculation and despite the fact that FE recruits from a more diverse background there is no commentary or attempt to show the potential distortion.

Even the trick of comparing 18-year-olds with 16 to 18-year-olds still shows that the proportion of BME students in the group affected is some 30 per cent higher than 16 to 18-year-olds as a whole (26 per cent as opposed to 20 per cent).

The impact assessment therefore chooses instead to highlight that within FE colleges being both from a BME background and from a disadvantaged postcode is not more prevalent among 18-year-olds than 16 to 18-year-olds.

Reading the impact assessment one is forced to conclude that this is not evidence-based policy-making but policy-based evidence.

The assessment appears to have been written to justify a policy that is clearly flawed. At a superficial level it manages to do that, but it does not hold up to serious scrutiny

Mick Fletcher is an FE Consultant

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FE Week experts

Working backwards to move forwards on attracting 'elusive' 16 to 18 apprentices



Providers delivered less 16 to 18 apprenticeship provision last year than they had initially expected. It resulted in a £241.5m under-delivery on the programme across the sector. Ben Pike looks at what providers can do to get more teenagers interested in apprenticeships.

At a time when the media is shining the spotlight on apprenticeships and the government is making significant investment in vocational training, apprenticeship providers should be dancing with joy at the influx of young people to fill thousands of roles across the UK.

The market for 16 to 18-year-olds is a target market which is arguably having the toughest time to find work and so should be falling over itself to grab the opportunities that an apprenticeship can offer.

But this is not the picture across the industry.

“It is a pity that some higher-achieving schools still show resistance to apprenticeships, but this shouldn't dissuade providers from plugging away”

With many training providers struggling to find the right people to deliver on their funding allocations, why are some providers succeeding where others aren't?

We're a grade one provider and we have built success with 16 to 18s by giving them what they want — that's a real job, an exciting progression route in the IT sector, and industry-recognised qualifications that sup-

port them into their career.

But to achieve that, providers should start by pleasing the employer and work backwards to the candidate.

One challenge here is to communicate the benefits of apprenticeships to employers, and set their expectations accordingly.

We are honest with employers — a 16 to 18-year-old may take longer to become effective. They may interview less confidently. They may do some unusual things in the office.

Because 19+ candidates are only part-funded, QA also charges a programme fee for them.

Older candidates are likely to be more mature and boast professional experience. They require less of an investment in time, so we invite employers to invest more financially to work with them. This way, the employer is faced with a commercial choice over their new hire.

It is an effective, positive way to delineate the two funding options and frame the benefits in an employer's mind. The employer is challenged to make the internal investment in time required to take on a more junior person.

Beyond telling them what to expect from a candidate, providers need to help employers fit as much of the apprenticeship around their workplace needs as possible. A provider should help employers create bespoke development plans, so that apprentices come into a well-structured, nurturing environment.

The employer has thought about the role that the apprentices should fulfil — this is the structure upon which to hang the qualifications and units; not the other way around.

If a training provider can communicate opportunities through engaging dialogue and proactive campaigns, then those elusive 16 to

18-year-olds will respond positively.

Speak to 16 to 18-year-olds where they're likely to listen — via social media, on-the-go communications, or through their influencers and peers.

It is a pity that some higher-achieving schools still show resistance to apprenticeships, but this shouldn't dissuade providers from plugging away at the basics.

We see our apprentices as our strongest ambassadors, so we put them at the centre of our communications — whether via imagery, quotes on emails or appearing on YouTube, showcasing those who have enjoyed the process is by far our strongest endorsement.

And as for what to say — it comes back to giving them what they want.

As much as possible providers should give young people live, up-to-the-minute information on all vacancies and opportunities — creating a buzz and urgency as young people see their peers step into roles that could have been theirs.

Be bold with campaigns and unapologetic about success — in a fast-paced world, only the loudest are heard.

Finally, the candidate screening and selection process is a crucial ingredient to attracting young people to apprenticeships.

For many of these young people, an interview for an apprenticeship may be their first ever job interview and as an apprenticeship provider we have to do more than simply hand out tips. Through telephone assessments, recruitment days and interview preparation, there is a structured process that adds value and excites them at each stage.

Ben Pike, director, QA

Keeping the apprenticeship wage up to date in the workplace — and online

It took the National Apprenticeship Service, and the overarching Skills Funding Agency, three months to act over a 3p rise to £2.68 on the apprentice minimum wage. The rise happened in October, but it took until mid-December before the official online advertising system for apprenticeships was amended so as to only accept adverts at the higher wage. Stephen Gardner discusses the importance of keeping all things apprentice as clear as possible.

Given that apprenticeships should be about learning in the workplace rather than simply earning it is appropriate that there is a rate set for an apprenticeship minimum wage that is below the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

However, it also seems to me that this should be rigorously enforced by the government or those mandated to distribute funding, thereby ensuring that young apprentices are treated fairly by all employers.

Simply saying that the minimum wage should be paid is not enough — it seems the probability of an individual employer receiving a visit from a NMW officer is too low to prove a deterrent.

Apprentices in employment are not in a strong position to complain to their employers, even with the help of their training

provider and it would seem appropriate that there should be a means whereby apprentices, or those who know that wages lower than NMW are being paid, can notify the National Apprenticeship Service in confidence.

Once notified, there should be a duty on NAS to investigate and take appropriate action. This should involve liaison with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and, where substantiated, prosecution and remedial action in the form of back payment.

“Simply saying that the minimum wage should be paid is not enough”

Training providers should also be required to do more to ensure that the employers they contract with do pay the correct amount for all the hours worked.

Technically, only an apprentice paid the NMW is legitimately an apprentice, so the Skills Funding Agency could, in theory, recover any funding paid to a provider for an “apprentice” not in receipt of the NMW.

The first requirement is for the NMW to be



widely publicised so that all school leavers and their parents or guardians know what apprentices should be paid.

Careers advisers should be the first source of information — but this assumes that the current arrangement for providing careers advice tells the young people and their parents or guardians about apprenticeships at all.

The recent ruckus about the apprenticeships vacancy area of the NAS website is embarrassing for NAS and damaging to apprenticeships.

It should be a simple matter to ensure that the current NMW is automatically displayed on every appropriate page of the apprenticeship vacancy website, removing the opportunity for anyone to advertise a lower wage and I hope that this is something that NAS is now implementing in light of the recent adverse publicity.

Apprenticeships need to be clearly seen as a three-way investment in skills.

Government invests funding, employers (with the help of training providers) should invest in high class training, and young people invest their time and dedication to learning.

A fair financial contribution to help the apprentice with their living and travel costs during the apprenticeship is essential.

Stephen Gardner, chief executive of Fair Train

Valuable lessons learned on Indian working holiday

Twin brothers Lewis and Eliot Coble took a break from their Palmers College A-levels to re-decorate a school in a remote town in India. The experience left them with treasured memories and a greater appreciation of their own educational opportunities, writes Veronica Adenuga.

Painting a school in an Indian desert may not be every college 16-year-old's idea of a dream holiday, but brothers Lewis and Eliot Coble thought it beat lounging around on a beach in Spain.

The twins, from Chafford Hundred, Essex, were allowed time off from their A-level studies to travel to Bikaner, a small town in the Thar Desert, North West India.

The students from Palmer's College, in Grays, Essex, spent three days re-painting a local primary school as part of a team of 20 British youngsters.

Lewis said: "The school was literally a box of a building made of concrete with nothing much in it.

"They didn't have access to the internet, chairs or even desks. The children sat on the floor to study and they weren't taught by a qualified teacher — it was just people from the town who would come in, read them a story and teach them as much as they could.

"It makes you think about how lucky we are to have computers and so much modern technology in classrooms in this country."

Mark Vinall, principal of Palmer's College, said he was proud his students' efforts to

help improve learning conditions for Indian pupils.

He said: "Community service, locally and internationally, is an essential part of a Palmer's education and Lewis and Eliot are a terrific example of this commitment in action."

And the brothers said they found the experience rewarding despite having to work most of the time in temperatures above 30 °C (86 °F).

"You can have good time on a beach holiday in somewhere like Spain, but it doesn't compare to what you see and learn on a trip like the one we went on," said Lewis.

Eliot said: "It was really hot, but none of us minded because we were having such a good time together, and we got a good suntan too.

"It felt great when I thought about how the school looked before and how it looked after we'd finished. There was no doubt we'd made a big difference and I think the children were really pleased."

After their experiences in the desert, Lewis and Eliot said they were happy to return home and see brother Daniel, aged 21, and parents Joanne, 42, and Barry, 45.

The trip was organised by the twins' 282 Squadron East Ham air cadets and cost £1,600 each.

They raised more than £500 to help pay for their travel and accommodation through being sponsored to travel to every station on the London Underground within two days. The remaining cost was covered by the squadron with other fundraising events.



FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

Lewis and Eliot Coble outside the Taj Mahal. Inset left: The twins with the other air cadets who painted the school. Inset right: Lewis painting one of the school's window frames. Inset lower left: Air cadets painting school doors



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FE Week campus round-up

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David Hasselhoff with New College Nottingham learners and, inset, with the blue E-Type Jaguar he arrived in and Michael Wisher, of Nottingham Motor Company

Inspirational talk no hassle for the Hoff

Nottingham rider David Hasselhoff rolled back the years when he arrived for a talk with students in a stunning sports car.

The TV legend, widely known as “The Hoff”, made his name in the 1980s by driving a black Shelby GT500KR Mustang in cult-series Knight Rider.

He arrived outside Nottingham Broadway Cinema in a blue E-Type Jaguar to launch New College Nottingham’s Jamcon creative careers conference.

The actor, who has been appearing in The Theatre Royal Nottingham’s pantomime Peter Pan, spoke more than 300 students about his life and career in the media.

He said: “I’ve been around the block, I’ve been at the bottom and I’ve been at the top. If you have natural talent, you just need to get on it, never give up.

“You’ve got to show up in life, you’ve got to show up for your parents, show up in business and show up for yourself.”

Feeling the love of talent show judges



Talented students Rich Pedler and Jordan Gulvin

Weston College performing arts student Jordan Gulvin felt the love at a talent show after belting out a Donna Summer disco anthem.

He had not originally planned to take part in Weston’s Got Talent and only went along to the competition’s heats to support fellow Weston student Rich Pedler, aged 19, who impressed with his beatbox skills.

But the 20-year-old ended-up stunning the

audience with his falsetto rendition of the disco diva’s classic hit, I Feel Love.

Both of them made it to the final next month at Blakehay Theatre, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Jordan said: “I just went down to watch Rich and got persuaded into doing it. I gave it all I had, then left because I thought I wouldn’t get through. I was amazed when I heard I had.”

Outstanding Ofsted rating for social care



Krishna Singh, Dudley College’s international operations manager, celebrating with students Bruna Mirella Martins, aged 20, Harpreet Singh, 23, Lara Kapfer, 17, and Sanjeev Ohri, director of worldwide operations

Dudley College has been praised by Ofsted for its impressive student support services.

The regulator carried out a social care inspection on the college in November last year and the report now published gave it an “outstanding” rating.

Inspectors assessed the level of overall support for learners, promotion of diversity, and standards of residential care.

It concluded learners felt safe and well-supported by knowledgeable lecturers and

easily-accessible college-based support services.

Ofsted also praised the college’s Students Union for welcoming learners of all ages, nationality and ability.

Lowell Williams, principal at Dudley College, said: “We are delighted our social care inspection has achieved an outstanding grade, as only those providers judged to have outstanding overall effectiveness achieve this recognised quality kite-mark.”



Stuart Cutforth, principal of Northumberland College, and Andy McLeod, managing director of construction firm Robertson

Laying foundations for top class training

Work has started on a £9.5m scheme to transform Northumberland College.

A new state-of-the-art engineering workshop is set to be completed by this summer.

It will be home to the college’s training centre for advanced manufacturing, which will prepare young people for careers in research and development, automotive, and aerospace industries.

Work has also started on a new teaching

block and a tractor workshop, both of which should be ready for use later this year.

Stuart Cutforth, principal of the college, said: “We are very excited. The new facilities will greatly enhance the teaching and learning facilities for our students and local employers.

“The new engineering workshop will provide training to meet the demands of growing industries in our region.”

Send your stories with pictures to campus@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's **new** and who's leaving

Two retirements have seen new principals at the helm of colleges in London and South Cheshire.

Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College has appointed Dr Elaine McMahon CBE (pictured right) as interim principal, while Jasbir Dhesi (pictured far right) has taken over at South Cheshire College.

The appointments follow the retirement last month of Paula Whittle and Peter Swift respectively.

Dr McMahon, a former Harlow College and Hull College principal, joined on January 6 and will remain in the role until the college recruits a permanent successor later this year.

She has represented training and

education on a number of regional and national bodies, including the Confederation of British Industry and Chamber of Commerce. She is also a former chairman of the 157 Group.

"I am thrilled to be joining such an innovative and professional college at this critical juncture," said Dr McMahon, who was awarded a CBE in 2009 for services to local and national education. "The FE landscape is rapidly changing and there are challenging

times ahead, but our college continues to meet student and employer needs with year-on-year improved success rates and progression into employment."

She added: "I look forward to working with staff, students and the wider community during my time at the college. I hope to continue the work we

do in responding to the community and business needs of West London by making sure all of our students leave us with the skills and knowledge for clear paths into employment."

South Cheshire College's Mr Dhesi gave 21 years' service to Yale College, in Wrexham, before he was named its principal in September 2011.

Since 1996, he has held several senior management positions including assistant principal and vice principal for eight years.

Mr Dhesi, said: "I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to lead the college through the next stage of its development.

"I know that I am joining a special college with talented and dedicated staff and I'm looking forward to working with all the staff and students.

"I'm also excited about working closely with the local community and building on the excellent links we have with local businesses."

Vic Harris, chair of the corporation board at South Cheshire College, said: "As chair of the corporation, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Dhesi as principal.

"He has an excellent track record in the FE sector and we are confident

that he will help South Cheshire College to go from strength to strength in the months and years ahead.

"His leadership skills will be essential in ensuring that the College continues to provide the best education and learning experience for students."



If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college or training provider, please let us know by emailing news@feweek.co.uk

NOCN ... LEADING THE WAY

nocn
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

We develop qualifications that industry needs.

With our expertise and unique approach we're helping employers, LEPs and industrial partnerships to bridge the skills gap.

With a focus on employability, preparation for apprenticeships, apprenticeships and skills qualifications, NOCN provide flexible, high quality qualifications that individuals, employers and communities want and need.

For a full list of areas we offer apprenticeships in visit our website www.nocn.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook **NOCN1** and Twitter **@nocn1**.



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Subscribe before the end of January 2014 and receive £25 off.

Jobs

BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE IS SEEKING TO RECRUIT TO THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

Bishop
Auckland
College

RS13/14/DIR/110 Learning Area Manager

Full time permanent position
Salary dependent upon experience/qualifications

Bishop Auckland College is seeking to recruit a dynamic, forward thinking individual who will be responsible for leading Maths and English across the College to Outstanding. We are looking for a highly professional committed practitioner with experience in teaching Maths and/or English.

We seek an inspirational, aspiring manager with a proven track record of raising standards in this key area. Either a Maths and/or English specialist, in addition to leading the delivery of outstanding learning, you will develop the provision, drive quality improvements, achieve efficient timetabling and oversee Lead IV arrangements. Your teaching qualification and current knowledge of relevant education policy, through understanding of the Ofsted agenda for Maths and English will support and drive improvement in student retention, achievement and success.

The post holder will be responsible for:

- leading the development of teaching and learning methodologies
- the improvement of student performance within the curriculum
- monitoring and review of Key Performance Indicators
- the day to day line management of a team of curriculum staff
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of human and physical resources within the curriculum area.

The successful candidate will have a level 3 qualification or equivalent in Maths and/or English, a teaching qualification and will have significant teaching experience, experience of course coordination, leading teams, experience of teaching on a range of courses and at different levels and experience of working with external organisations.

Lecturer Coordinator in Electrical (RS13/14/DIR/131)

Permanent position from April 2014 – 37 hours per week
Salary dependent upon experience/qualifications

The successful candidate will have a level 3 qualification in a relevant subject and a Certificate in Education (or be willing to work towards within 2 years). Applicants will also have 3 years experience in the industry, recent experience of teaching on a range of courses in FE or a training establishment and a recent grade 2 observation or above.

Motor Vehicle Vacancies

We are seeking highly motivated individuals who have experience and qualifications in Motor Vehicle technologies and aspire to play a key role at Bishop Auckland College within a fantastic, committed team on our journey to outstanding. The College has the following vacancies available:

Lecturer Coordinator in Motor Vehicle (RS13/14/DIR/129)

Permanent position from February 2014 – 37 hours per week.
Salary dependent upon experience/qualifications

The successful candidate will have a level 3 qualification in a relevant subject area and a Certificate in Education (or be willing to work towards within 2 years). Applicants will also have 3 years experience in the industry, recent experience of teaching on a range of courses in FE or a training establishment and a recent grade 2 observation or above.

Part Time Teachers in Motor Vehicle (RS13/14/PT/190)

Temporary positions – from February 2014 until August 2014
Grade: £21.91 per hour (Un-Qualified), £23.23 per hour (Qualified)

The successful candidate will have a Level 3 qualification in a relevant subject area and a Certificate of Education (or be willing to work towards within 2 years.) Applicants will also have experience of teaching on a range of courses.

Learning Coach in Motor Vehicle (RS13/14/LC/29)

Temporary Position from February 2014 until June 2014
Teaching Staff Contract Grade: £15.01 (hourly rate includes annual leave entitlement).

The successful candidate will have a Level 3 qualification in the relevant vocational area and CTELS qualification or be willing to work towards within 1 year. Applicants will also have knowledge and experience relating to working commercially within the specialist area.

If you wish to discuss the Motor Vehicle vacancies in further detail, please contact Learning Area Leader Sharron Tunstall on 01388 443058.



To advertise with us call
Hannah Smith on

020 81234 778

For further details and an application form please visit the College website www.bishopaucklandcollege.ac.uk email rachel.sowerby@bacol.ac.uk or contact our 24 hour answering service on 01388 443108. Closing date for receipt of applications is: Friday 31 January 2014 at 12 noon

Bishop Auckland College is committed to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity. The College has a Day Nursery open to the General Public. Students and Staff. Bishop Auckland College is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of all learners and any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory DBS disclosure.



It's all in the data

Data Architect

£36,090 - £39,099 pa depending on experience • East Ham

Students come to us because of our superb resources and high-quality teaching. Employers turn to us for the kind of leading-edge vocational training which gives them a competitive edge. In fact, Newham College is a vibrant hub, helping to transform the prospects of individuals and organisations across East London.

You will assist in the design, development and maintenance of reports within EBS (the college student management system), the college data warehouse and the college dashboard. You will also design, develop and maintain data reports based on other sources such as Pro-Achieve, Pro-Monitor and FIS, and provide guidance for their interpretation.

With good literacy and numeracy skills, you will have previous experience in a similar role, or hold a professional qualification. You will be expert in developing advanced reports in Reporting Services, MS Access and MS Excel and have experience in the design, testing, implementation and their review.

Competent in Visual Basic, T-SQL and Oracle SQL, you will have a good knowledge of the Microsoft Business Intelligent Suite of Applications. Previous experience gained in the FE sector with knowledge of its data reporting requirements would be ideal. Ref: 4177.

This position is subject to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service, previously known as CRB) clearance. The College is committed to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of all learners and expects all staff to share this commitment. The College is an equal opportunities employer.

Please apply via the recruitment portal at www.newham.ac.uk

Closing date: 27 January 2014.

BEING THE BEST - BELIEVE IT, ACHIEVE IT



DIRECTOR OF STOCKTON RIVERSIDE COLLEGE (BEDE)

Stockton Riverside College has ambitious plans

We have a newly-established Senior Leadership Team with the drive and commitment to take the College to new heights. We have made rapid progress and we want to maintain this impetus to deliver outstanding learning opportunities to our local community.

Our recently built sixth form provision is located in Billingham, approximately six miles away from the main College site. These stunning facilities provide an exciting and stimulating environment for our young people. They provide a wonderful opportunity to develop provision to further meet the needs of learners.

We therefore wish to appoint an outstanding individual to grow the education provision in Billingham and the surrounding area.

This is a role for someone prepared to work hard to make a difference to the lives of young people. In return for your commitment, leadership skills, ability to think creatively and desire to lead Stockton Riverside College (Bede) to higher standards of performance, you will receive the full support of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

We encourage potential applicants to contact our Deputy Principal, Mick Hickey to discuss the post in more detail. Please arrange an appropriate time by emailing him: mick.hickey@stockton.ac.uk

Further details of the post, including the job description, person specification and application form are available on our college website www.stockton.ac.uk/inspire

The closing date for applications is noon on Monday 27 January 2014.

Interviews will be held on 13-14 February 2014



COLLYER'S
The College of Richard Collyer



PRINCIPAL

From 1st September 2014

Horsham, West Sussex

Salary: Negotiable according to skills and experience but likely to be in the range £35-39 (c. £86,000-£95,000 per annum).

The governors wish to appoint an exceptional Principal to provide outstanding leadership and strategic management of this high performing Sixth Form College.

The successful applicant will have impressive levels of commitment, drive and resilience to steer the College through the changing educational landscape, building on the high standards and strong ethos for which it is known.

The college has a well proven record of educating for excellence and is a supportive, challenging and enjoyable place to work.

We welcome approximately 1700 16-18 year old daytime students on a range of exam courses including A/AS level, B.Tech and GCSE. Our 4A's Centre accommodates a further 500 students on adult education evening courses as well as apprenticeships and access courses. The governors and staff are passionate about ensuring students can enjoy highly effective teaching and learning which enables all to reach their full potential and justifies the College's 'Outstanding' Ofsted status.

An application form and further information can be obtained by visiting www.collyers.ac.uk or from **Nicola Whitehead**, Clerk to the Governing Body on **01403 210822 ext: 519**.

Closing date for applications: Noon on Tuesday 4th February 2014.

Interviews: 10th and 11th March with final selection panel on 14th March.

Jobs

Your Future Starts

Walsall Adult and Community College is one of the first learning and skills providers to secure outstanding status with Ofsted with a clean sweep of grade one judgements across the board.

We have a diverse curriculum which serves the needs of post-16 learners in vocational education, skills for life apprenticeships and community development.

As part of our continuing growth and development as an outstanding provider we are seeking to recruit talented people to join us in the next stages of our journey.

Assistant Principal – Finance & Resources

Ref: NS57013

£45,016 - £50,656 per annum

Responsibility for a key business support service and providing strategic and operational financial services; you will possess an appropriate professional qualification and develop high performance business support and finance teams

Assistant Principal – Quality Assurance & Support

Ref: NS57113

£45,016 - £50,656 per annum

To lead our quality strategy and ensure we continue to develop as an outstanding college; you will have experience, at a senior level in an education environment, leading quality assessment and improvement as well as a successful track record in the leadership and management of teaching, learning and assessment.

Executive Business Development Advisor 0.5

Ref: NS57313

£41,208 - £46,371 per annum, pro rata to hours worked

To be responsible to the Principal for all aspects of the college's marketing and business liaison activities in order to raise the college's profile locally, regionally and nationally as an outstanding provider and identify income generating opportunities.

Executive Planning & Funding Advisor 0.5

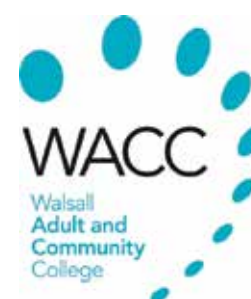
Ref: NS57413

£37,719 - £42,444 per annum, pro rata to hours worked

To be responsible to the Vice Principal for all aspects of planning and optimising funding for curriculum and learning support activity and to establish effective mechanisms to ensure funding is efficiently planned, recorded and secured.

Assessment Centres/Interviews for these posts will take place week commencing 03 March 2014

Here..



Senior Curriculum Leaders x 2

Ref: NS57213

£35,553 - £38,850 per annum

To be responsible to the Vice Principal for strategic leadership, sound management, innovation for growth and development, within a broad ranging and diverse curriculum. Post 1 has a functional Skills and ESOL bias. Post 2 covers vocational provision and provision for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (Please indicate if you are applying for Post 1 or Post 2).

Pathway Leaders x 3

Ref: NS57513

(Supported Learning; Creative Arts; English & Humanities)

£25,704 - £30,690 per annum

Fundamentally teaching posts but with a lead on the development of a coherent and progressive curriculum pathway within a subject sector, providing curriculum expertise and guidance to the development of courses and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment within a designated pathway and subject sector.

Social Science Tutor 0.5 FTE

Ref: NS57613

£18,354 - £28,929 per annum, pro rata to hours worked

To provide excellent teaching and assessment to learners undertaking programmes including criminology, sociology and psychology.

Maths tutor 1.0 FTE

Ref: NS57713

£18,354 - £28,929 per annum

To provide excellent teaching and assessment of maths including functional skills from entry to level two and GCSE maths

Interviews for these posts will take place week commencing 03 March 2014

Closing date for all posts Monday 10 February 2014

Visit our website at **www.walsall.gov.uk/jobshop**



Walsall Council





INDUSTRY MASTER CLASSES AND EVENTS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT YOU

Last year, we introduced you to a new service called **City & Guilds Advance**. Made up of a tailored programme of consultancy, masterclasses and events, it's designed to raise further education standards.

In 2014, we're hosting a series of **Advance Events** across the UK to support colleges and private training providers. Our team of experts will be on hand to talk about a range of subjects, from the learner journey to the benefits of work experience. But above all, they're a great way to discover how City & Guilds can help you and your business.

Find out more and book your place:
www.cityandguilds.com/advance-events

HELPING YOU TO
RAISE STANDARDS

FE Week Sudoku challenge

		9	5				7	
				3	9		6	
	7			4				2
5		8	3	2				6
4				5	8	1		7
7				1				8
	4		9	6				
	2				4	6		

Difficulty:
EASY
How to play:
Fill in all
blank squares
making sure
that each row,
column and
3 by 3 box
contains the
numbers 1 to 9

Solutions:
Next week

							5	9
4			2				8	6
		1			8			
1				8			7	
	3		5		6		4	
	9		2					1
			4			3		
6	5			1				8
7	4							

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

1	5	4	9	6	8	7	2	3
6	7	2	5	3	1	4	8	9
9	3	8	2	7	4	6	5	1
8	4	9	1	2	3	5	7	6
3	1	6	7	4	5	2	9	8
5	2	7	8	9	6	1	3	4
4	8	3	6	5	7	9	1	2
7	9	1	4	8	2	3	6	5
2	6	5	3	1	9	8	4	7

Difficulty:
EASY

4	3	7	6	5	8	1	9	2
8	9	6	7	2	1	3	5	4
1	5	2	9	4	3	7	8	6
3	8	5	1	6	7	4	2	9
2	1	9	4	3	5	8	6	7
7	6	4	2	8	9	5	3	1
6	7	3	8	9	4	2	1	5
5	2	1	3	7	6	9	4	8
9	4	8	5	1	2	6	7	3

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference
to WIN an FE Week mug!



Spot five differences. First entry wins an FE Week mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.

Last week's spot the difference winner was Linda How, director of Milton Keynes-based Learn to Change.